

Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13-14)

Barnabas and Saul had already been working with the church at Antioch for a year when the prophets came down from Jerusalem and foretold the famine that would come upon the entire world. During that time, "a great many people" were taught, and from this primarily Gentile church the origin of the name Christian developed.

So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Acts 11:26

Barnabas and Saul were then chosen to take the alms to the elders of the churches in Judea (Acts 11:30). After the work was completed, he took John Mark with them and returned to Antioch.

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark. Acts 12:25

As we noted last week, Herod's death is one of the few places in the Acts where a historical event dates the period. Herod died in 44AD, so Paul's return from Jerusalem would coincide with that date. We don't know how long they worked after their return, but the next event the Spirit wanted us to know about was the call of these two men to begin taking the gospel into the remotest parts of the earth. It is important to see that not only did inspiration include the preaching, but often who was to receive it.

2 The Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Preaching in Cyprus ... 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ... Acts 13:2,4

3 Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. Acts 14:3

27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, ... 4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, ... they reported all things that God had done with them. Acts 14:27; 15:4

This was also true throughout the prophets as Jonah was told to go to Nineveh and Amos to Israel. After the appropriate fasting and praying to ask God's help and guidance, they send them out.

They Sailed to Cypress

Their first city after leaving the ship is Salamis. We have seen enough from the sermons Peter preached and the miracles performed by Peter to know the type of work they did there. Luke simply records that while in Salamis they found all the synagogues of the Jews and preached there. They continued to do this throughout the island until they came to Paphos. This became Paul's order of work throughout all his preaching. It was always to the Jew first and then to the Greek.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Rom. 1:16-17

tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Rom. 2:9-10

God wanted the message preached to the Jew first then to the Greek for two reasons. First, to fulfill prophecy for God had promised to call his people back from the remotest parts of the earth.

the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Deut. 30:3-4

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, ... 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. Isa. 11:1-2; 11-12

Second after the gospel had been preached to the Jews this in each location, God would then use the Gentiles converts to stir up and provoke to jealousy those Jews who could still be reached.

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. ... 13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. ... 28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the

mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Rom 11:28-32

Hence through the entire island of Cypress they first entered a synagogue to fulfill God's promise to call Israel back from captivity. After this, they would turn to the Gentiles. This they did until they came to the city of Paphos where something happened noteworthy enough to be remembered.



Saul who is also called Paul

Up to this point in the history of the church, the name Barnabas has always preceded Paul, but something happened in Paphos that changed that. It centered around the Proconsul Sergius Paulus desire to hear the gospel and a false prophet named Bar-Jesus who was also called Elymas.

the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him Acts 13:7-10

It began with “Barnabas and Saul” being called and ends with “Paul and his company” sailing from Paphos. In between Saul strikes the false prophet/sorcery blind and converts Sergius Paulus. Some have concluded that the name was changed due to this. Others because Paul means small and might have had to do with his stature.

Saul or Shaul = “desired” ... = “asked of” (BDB Hebrew Lexicon, OT:7586)

Paul (small, little). (Smith's Bible Dictionary)

The variants “Saul who **is** also called Paul” and “Saul who **was** also called Paul” came about because the verb of being “is” is often left out and is supplied by the Greek mind. Hence the translators supplied the tense of the verb of being as “is” (KJV; NKVJ; ASV) or “was” (NAS; ESV; NIV). There really is no definitive answer of why the name itself was changed at this point. Some have even affirmed that both names were given (Hebrew and Roman) at his birth and now the Roman name takes prominence.

John Mark returned to Jerusalem

After they arrived at Perga something occurred that led John Mark to leave them. Again much thought has gone into the reasons. We have two facts:

they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. 13:13-14

Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. 15:37-39

Since Perga is the port city and John departed from them there, it is possible that during the journey from Paphos John Mark made up his mind and then acted upon it by taking a ship back to Jerusalem from Perga. What prompted him to leave? All we have is Paul's later contention that it was not good to take him again because he did not go with them to the work. Paul did not think it was a good reason and he was so set against it that it led to the separation of these two co-workers.

Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia

This is the first of Paul's recorded sermons in Acts. It was in a Jewish synagogue in Antioch and Paul addressed it to both the Men of Israel, and you who fear God (proselytes). Although this might have been an exception, Paul and Barnabas are asked to preach.

Like most sermons in the Scriptures the beginning is prepared to build rapport and open the hearts of the hearers. Paul begins by reminding those present that God chose our fathers brought them out Egypt into 40 years in wilderness, destroyed seven nations of Canaan, and gave them judges for about 450 years until Samuel the prophet. They asked for a king; so God gave them Saul for forty years. He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king (a man after My own heart, who will do all My will). (17-21)

And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' 23 From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior — Jesus— 24 after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.' Acts 13:22-25

Once Paul reached David he immediately moved forward to Jesus and the points of the sermon began.

1. From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior— Jesus— **:23**
A. John's testimony: I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me **:24-25**
2. Those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor the Prophets fulfilled them in condemning Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. **:27-28**

A When they fulfilled all that was written(Isa 53; Ps 22; etc.) , they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. :29

3. God raised Him from the dead. :30

A Seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee are His witnesses. :31

B He raised up Jesus, as written in 2nd Psalm: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' :33

C He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David. (Isa 55:1-7) :34

D In another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' (Ps 16:9-11) :35

E For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. :36-37

Conclusion:

Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

Almost the Whole City Came Out

This exemplifies why this was the fulness of time and why the gospel could spread so quickly. Nearly the entire city was interested enough to come out and listen to the gospel. Sadly the Jews were not happy with this event and were so filled with jealousy that they began to blaspheme. Keep in mind also that it is here that the seeds of Paul being stoned at Lystra are sown.

By inspiration these Jews are informed that it had been necessary to preach the gospel to the Jews first, but since they had rejected it, they would move on to the Gentiles.

"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" 48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:46-48

As the preached in Antioch, word spread out into the surrounding region and soon had spread to all. The disobedient Jews, sought to stop the progress by using their influence with the prominent men and women who were devout enough to have influence over them. This influence was used to pass a law that expelled them from Antioch.

The Gospel Preached at Iconium

The circumstances at Iconium are similar enough to that at Antioch that Luke doesn't record the sermon and only gives the highlights of their time there. Once again they go to the synagogue first, and once again a multitude of both Jews and Gentiles are converted. This time the Jews again seek to stir up persecution against them. But they were still able to stay a long time and Luke lets us know one of the ways that Jesus worked with them.

So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. Mark 16:19-20

Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. Acts 14:3

Over time the city became polarized into two distinct groups and they were forced to leave.

Paul and Barnabas Flee to Lystra and Derbe

A plot to stone them was uncovered and since the work had been done and the disciples were prepared they quickly decided to leave(flee). There is no indication of the preaching in a synagogue in Lystra, either because nothing of note happened or because there was no synagogue there. The events occurring in Lystra center around Gentiles and there is no mention of the Jews there.

The miracle in Lystra mirrors that of Peter's before his second sermon. But the results were far different. The man had the faith to leap up so Paul used a very powerful method of simply telling him to stand up and when the man complied all were filled with amazement. But because they did not have the background of those Peter preached to the miracle actually became a hindrance because of their superstition.

Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Acts 14:11-12

Instead of waiting for Paul to explain the miracle, they immediately jumped to the wrong conclusion

and the efforts that Paul and Barnabas had to use to keep this from happening likely offended some who were present and made it much easier for the Jews to malign them.

The sermon consisted of proof that the gods they were serving were “*useless things*.” Although they directed them to the one true God:

And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them. Acts 14:18

Paul is Stoned and They Supposed He was Dead

Luke doesn't record any of the events after that. Only that this left things open and easy for the Jews from Antioch and Iconium who pursued them to Iconium and by slander moved these people to turn against them. Paul was stoned and drug outside of the city. Paul remembered this and recounted it about fourteen years later to the Corinthians.

Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 2Cor 11:25

This event has led to several interesting questions. Was Paul dead or not. The multitudes left thinking he was dead. Were they right or wrong? Luke doesn't tell us. So the question: “Did Paul's spirit leave his body as they drug him outside the city and then return? “Was Paul only unconscious?” Since this is the only time when this question could have been asked and since Herod died in 44 and the Corinthian letter was written in 58, it would have been about 14 years. Perhaps it is this event that Paul described.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 2Cor 12:2-5

There is no way to affirm one way or another, but it certainly adds some interest possibilities. Perhaps even Paul did not know if he was unconscious, “*in the body*” or actually dead “*out of the body*.” Finally Luke revealed the effectiveness of their preaching at Lystra for “*the disciples had gathered around him*.”

The Next day Paul and Barnabas left for Derbe

Nothing at Derbe stood out enough for Luke to record except “*when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples*.” After they completed this Luke tells us they returned to the congregations in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. While there, they gave exhortations and encouragement that would “*strengthen the souls of the disciples*,” to remain faithful and “*continue in the faith*.” Also reminding them that “*We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God*.” That this also included Derbe before they left is confirmed in the next verse.

In each location, they went through the process Paul described later to Timothy and Titus. This is how men ought to conduct themselves in house of God, the church of the living God. Elders should be appointed in every city, but these men must desire this office and be qualified.

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you — 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. Titus 1:5-9

These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim 3:14-16

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Tim 3:1-7

Paul and Barnabas and remained in each city long enough to fulfill these things. They also preached in Perga then returned to Antioch where they gathered the church together and gave a report.

Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples. Acts 14:28